



**P-4 Council**  
**CSEA/SEIU Local 2001**  
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March 3, 2008

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Donald DeFronzo, Co-Chair  
Representative Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chair  
Room 2300, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Gayle Slossberg, Co-Chair  
Representative Christopher Caruso, Co-Chair  
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Public Hearing on HB 5041: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AVIATION AND PORTS AND A  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS.**

Members of the Transportation and GAE Committees:

I am Ned Statchen, and an Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation with 22 years of service. I am also a member of CSEA/SEIU Local 2001.

I am submitting this testimony in **opposition** to HB #5041 which would divide the DOT. The different bureaus of DOT need to continue to work together to make sure we are getting the most from all areas of transportation in the State.

I work in the Bridge Safety Unit and I would like to share with you some of the ways I have worked and serviced the bureaus that this bill would like to break away.

For Aviation, myself and others in my unit have inspected problem areas of the elevated extended driveway for the older portion of Bradley International Airport and determined the need for load restrictions to keep trucks off the platform and recommend repairs. We continue to inspect the Airport ramp system and DOT District 1 Maintenance continues to be responsible to perform repairs as necessary. I have also done inspections on lighting towers and problems with Maintenance Facility Buildings on smaller airports.

For Ports, my unit, along with an underwater consultant has done several inspections on the State Pier in New London. I was called at home on an emergency basis and rendered inspection assistance when a section of the old State Pier collapsed due to deterioration and overload. The Bureau of Aviation and Ports works with us notifying the Coast Guard when our bridge inspections take place over navigable waterways, including structures that are deemed important by Homeland Security. We even do inspections on the approach movable ramp system that is used by the Chester – Hadlyme ferry.

For Public Transportation, my unit has commented on construction plans for the

future New Britain – Hartford Busway, suggesting ways to make future inspections and maintenance on bridges most cost effective. And I'm sure, unless the DOT is changed, we will be the ones doing the biennial safety inspections on the bridges for the busway.

My point is that when facing challenges, the different Bureaus within DOT can work very well together to get the job done. It is important to keep those lines of communication close, not to divide them apart. If you had two agencies it can get more complicated regarding funding, who can charge to various project numbers, what the Feds will allow, who will do the regular audits, etc.

In addition, every agency has their own Human Resource office, Core-CT payroll staff, and fiscal office, among others. Why would we want to duplicate all these resources and their expenses?

And your Dept of Public Transportation is still going to need a Bureau of Engineering to work on and provide expertise for design and construction of projects like the busway, railroad station improvements, bus and rail car maintenance facilities, etc. Why not use the Bureau of Engineering you already have?

There is no question the Department needs to improve our operation as the incredible mistakes on I-84 have shown. As a long time employee, I feel it is extremely regrettable that the taxpayers of Connecticut have been let down. There is still work to be done trying to get the politics out of the DOT and though realistically it can never be totally eliminated, it needs to be reduced. I think the clean contracting bill passed last year along with new ethics reforms will help. Efforts to increase our staffing levels will also help in preventing wasteful mistakes like this from happening again.

I have read that the proposal to create two agencies out of one comes from frustration that our goals are misplaced or that we are ignoring public transportation initiatives. From where I sit, those issues are all about leadership, both hers and the people whom she appoints into Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner positions. For the last few years, there seems to be a revolving door into leadership positions at the DOT.

It would seem to me that if you want the DOT to improve its focus, you need to appoint people who are going to stay long enough to make those initiatives clear and also be around long enough to make sure his or her directions are being carried out.

The Governor can do that. For example, the Governor pushed for a rail car maintenance facility that was sorely needed, and because she provided the push, the DOT made it a priority and placed substantial resources into it. She has also appointed a Deputy Commissioner in charge of the Bureau of Public Transportation. Why not, then, have that person report directly to the Governor on the progress of her priorities regarding public transportation? If the progress is inadequate, then that person, with their staff, needs to come up with a plan to improve, and the Department would know the Governor stands behind those priorities.

It just seems to me that there has to be a better way to improve the focus of the Department of Transportation, aside from tearing it in two.

I look forward to further opportunities to work with your Committees in reforming the culture at the State Department of Transportation.

**Ned Statchen**

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Chapter 9 Member, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001